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**Vulnerable Population Summary and Proposed Program**

Target population of interest: People diagnosed with HIV/AIDS.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a blood borne disease, which basically attacks the immune system. When the immune system gets weak, person loses the ability to fight illness and recover. This disease takes a long time to show symptoms, it might not make a carrier look or feel sick for many years but still can infect others. A lot of people suffering from HIV feel healthy and normal until the very last stage when it turns into Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) so the only way to know if someone is affected is to be tested for it. It is a sexually transmitted disease that can be spread in case of contact with the infected blood and to a child from infected mother during pregnancy or breastfeeding.

Unfortunately, the medical science has not come up with the cure for this deadly disease but there are medications that help slow down the progression of AIDS in body.

**Ethnicity/Culture**

World Health Organization's surveillance data for HIV indicates that HIV infection rates are excessively high within the ethnic minorities. At all stages of this disease, from early infection to death, African- Americans have the highest percentage of HIV infections than any other population. Out of 64% of the world’s population that has HIV, 42% of them are Hispanic/Latino, Black/African-American, Native American/ Hawaiian or Asian/Pacific Islanders. One of the most important factors that contribute to the high rate of HIV infection within these communities is the country of birth. There is significantly larger ratio of HIV infections spread through specific kind of drug injections in Hispanic men born in Puerto Rico. Another cultural aspect of vulnerability in people with HIV is that there is no recognition or acceptance of STDs in many parts of the world. It is not possible to spread awareness regarding this disease in those places which may also play a major role in increasing the vulnerability to HIV infections. HIV carriers in those parts of the world don’t access treatment for their disease out of shame and embarrassment. (Edward, 2019)

**Income**

Low income is a major factor that has an impact on people carrying HIV disease. According to the statistics of 2018, developed and civilized areas have much lower rates of HIV and other related diseases. It is evident from the studies that higher the wealth quintile is, the awareness and knowledge related to HIV are better. There will be less biased attitude towards people living with HIV. Pregnant women will have knowledge and access to the counseling about taking an HIV test and using precautions.

People with low annual income or no stable financial source face greater risks related to HIV. There is a high fertility rate among women from lowest quintiles. Female of age 15-21 from the lowest quintile are at a greater risk of having a teenage pregnancy which causes more and more financial issues. These are considered to be the factors which can enhance the risks and vulnerabilities related to HIV. Carriers of HIV disease with low income are mostly unable to afford the treatment and suffer a great deal. (Fiona Samuels, 2012)

**Social, Political and economic factors affecting the Vulnerability in PLHIV**

People with HIV face huge discrimination and bias in healthcare services and employment. Getting a job or housing and violence within their communities. Laws and policies related to the HIV carriers in many countries are not very clear due to the lack of knowledge on this disease. People don’t have much access to the information regarding human rights obligations of governments, legal procedure for any kind of insurance, buying or selling property and adoption.

 In most of the developing countries there is no support from the state for PLHIV. Governments must extend their efforts for the people who need help and fulfill the privilege to health through evidence-based programs related to HIV and target the most affected people.

 HIV carriers have a hard time finding stable source of income due to their health condition and biased attitude of most employers around the world. Which is why they find it hard to access to the proper health care and other basic necessities of life to maintain a standard living.

**Propose program for the Community**

There are many issues that the African-American community faces regarding HIV. There is no proper awareness program for the community where they are educated about the risks, causes and symptoms of the disease. More than half of people carrying HIV don’t know it till the very last stage which makes it nearly impossible to cure. As per the research, biased attitude of health care professionals and other authorities towards PLHIV is another major issue.

I propose a program on community level in order to spread awareness and conduct helpful sessions for people suffering from HIV. In this program, PLHIV will register in support groups and get the psychological help they need. Charity galas would be conducted on yearly basis to offer financial help to those who cannot afford proper treatment and medications. With the help of healthcare professionals, HIV tests would be conducted in the community on regular basis. With the help of medical history, patients would be recommended with the most appropriate healthcare plans. Online or telephone assistance would be provided to the people living with HIV in any case of emergency. (Mcallon, 2018)

# References

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